

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Application for Letters Patent

TITLE: MINIATURE SHADE

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MINIATURE SHADE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to shades for shielding objects from sunlight, and more particularly to a miniature, portable umbrella apparatus that can be detachably
5 mounted over a small object to shade the object from direct sunlight.

Sunbathing has long been a popular pastime. However, while sunbathing it is desirable to protect certain objects, such as cold beverages, from direct sunlight. Shaded areas often are not
10 conveniently located, and sometimes not available at all. For example, there is no protection from the sun on an open beach, and a only large beach umbrellas are available for shade. However, the large beach umbrellas can be troublesome on a crowded beach because they are cumbersome, take up a large amount of space, and cast a
15 large shadow.

Sometimes it is desirable to provide shade at small, select locations. For example, it may be desirable to read a book or drink a cold beverage while sunbathing, and the sunbather may wish to shade only those small objects.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

To this end, it is an object of the present invention to provide a miniature shade that can easily and selectively be positioned over a small object to shade the object from direct sunlight, without casting a large shadow.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a portable shade that can be easily carried to a beach to shade certain objects from direct sunlight.

In accordance with the above objects, the present invention broadly contemplates a miniature shade or umbrella with a support extending therefrom and a flexible base which can be removably attached to an object for shading. There is a fastener on the base so that the shade or umbrella can be mounted onto the base to shade the object. Indeed, portions of the human anatomy may also be shaded with the present invention.

The above and other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description of preferred embodiments when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which the same reference numerals are used to identify the same or similar parts in the several views.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is an exploded perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a plan view of the base element of the present invention;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of the present invention in one contemplated use; and

Fig. 4 is an exploded perspective view showing other embodiments of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to Fig. 1, the present invention includes a miniature shade 1 and a corresponding base 2. The shade preferably is dome-shaped, similar to an umbrella, but can have any desired shape. The shade preferably is about 3 inches to about 6 inches in diameter and about 2 inches to about 4 inches in height. The shade can be decoratively colored, or may display a decoration or an emblem.

Extending from the shade is a support 6, which preferably is about 2 inches to about 6 inches in length. Preferably, the dome-shaped shade is collapsible around the support for easy carrying and storing, like an umbrella. Fastener 8 is formed, for example, of loop fasteners sold under the trademark VELCRO, is attached to

the support, preferably toward the end farthest from the shade and wrapped around the circumference of the support.

Base 2 is an elongated flexible band of suitable material, such as nylon, that can be wrapped around the object to be shaded, or around another object and positioned to shade the object to be shaded. For example, if the user wishes to shade a beverage glass or bottle, as illustrated in Fig. 3, base 2 is wrapped around the glass or bottle. If the user is sitting in a chair and wishes to shade a object he or she is holding, such as a book, base 2 is wrapped around the arm of the chair in a similar fashion.

The base may be continuous, in the form of a tube, or may be a length of material which can be folded into a generally tubular shape and held in such shape by fastening means, such as snaps, VELCRO, or other well known means for fastening material.

In the embodiment shown in Fig. 2, the base 2 includes an elongated, flexible band 10 made from any suitable material, as will be describe below. A strip of hook fasteners 11 is attached to the band 10 substantially along its length, with a portion of the fastener, tab 12, extending beyond the end of the band 10.

Located on the underside of tab 12 are loop fasteners 15 for cooperation with the hook fasteners 11 on the band 10. To wrap the base around an object as described above and as illustrated in Fig.

3, the opposing ends of the band 10 are brought together to form a tube, with the strip of hook fasteners 11 on the outside of the tube, as shown in Fig. 1. Tab 12 is drawn around the tube and loop fasteners 15 are attached to hook fasteners 11. The size of the tube is adjustable to conform to the object to be shaded by placing the tab 12 at any position along the strip of hook fasteners 11.

Shade 1 and support 6 are attached to the base by connecting fastener 8 with fastener 11. The position or angle of the shade and support can be adjusted simply by detaching and reattaching fastener 8 anywhere along fastener 11 at any angle. In that way, objects can be quickly, easily and selectively shaded from any angle.

Both the shade 1 and base 2 can be made from any suitable material, but for ease of manufacture they are made from the same material. The material preferably is lightweight, waterproof and washable, such as, for example, nylon. The base also may be made from neoprene, for example, to provide insulation when used with a cold beverage container. It also is possible to form the base 2 from a stretchable material, such as a blend of nylon and spandex, so that the base can be stretched to fit around the object to be shaded.

Fig. 4 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention, wherein the fastener for removably attaching shade 3 to base 10 includes a ball and socket arrangement. Ball 20 is secured at the free end of support 6, and socket 21 is secured to band 10. Ball 20 is slightly smaller than socket 21 so that shade 3 can be snapped onto and off of band 10, and the angle of the shade 3 can be selectively adjusted by rotating ball 20 within socket 21.

Fig. 4 also illustrates another embodiment of the base 2 of the present invention. Base 2 includes fasteners 25 and 26, which can be cooperating hook and loop fasteners or snaps, for example, respectively connected to the opposing ends of the band 10. To wrap the base around an object, the opposing ends of the band 10 are brought together to form a tube, with socket 21, for example, on the outside of the tube. Fasteners 25 and 26 are connected together and the base is adjusted so that socket 21 is at a position to support shade 3 at a desired angle.

Fig. 4 further illustrates an alternative embodiment of the support 6 of the present invention. As shown in Fig. 4, support 6 is flexible, formed of a spring, for example. The position of shade 3 can be temporarily adjusted by bending the support 6. This embodiment is useful when, for example, the apparatus is shading a beverage, and the user wishes to drink from the shaded beverage

container. The support 6, and therefore the shade 3, automatically returns to its original shading position after the user releases the pressure initially applied to bend the support 6 for moving the shade 3 out of the way.

5 In this embodiment, support 6 may be mounted to the base 2 in a fixed or detachable manner by any suitable fastening arrangement, including but not limited to the hook and loop fasteners as described above and shown in Figs. 1-3, by the ball and socket arrangement of Fig. 4, or by a non-rotatable socket into which the
10 free end of support 6 is inserted.

 It is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the features, embodiments and uses specifically set forth above, but may be carried out in other ways without departure from its spirit.

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